



# PETROGALE PENICILLATA, Gray.

## Brush-tailed Rock Wallaby.

Spec. Char.—*P. vellere* longo, subrigido; saturatè fusco, purpureo tincto; prymno et caudæ basi ferrugineis; humeris et lateribus saturatè vinoso-cinereis, hoc colore ab illo partium superiorum lineâ pallidiore et indistinctâ sejuncto; lineâ angustâ albâ a gutture per medium pectus ductâ; auribus nigris, ad basin cinereis; antibrachiis et antipedibus, tarsis pedibusque e ferrugineo nigris; caudâ nigrâ, perlongâ ad apicem floccosâ.

Descr.—Fur long and rather harsh; general colour dusky brown tinged with purple, passing into deep rusty red on the rump and base of the tail; face dark grey; a dusky white mark commences at the lip and extends along the face to the ear; a narrow dark line runs from the middle of the forehead nearly half way down the back; shoulders and flanks dark vinous grey, separated from the general tint of the upper surface by an indistinct line of a lighter tint, in some specimens scarcely to be distinguished; a narrow white line extends from the throat down the centre of the chest; abdomen brown, becoming more rufous towards the lower part of the body; ears black, passing to grey at the base, and with a distinct band of rufous along the outer edge; arms and hands, tarsi and feet rusty black; tail black, very long, and clothed with long hairs forming a brush.

Some specimens are more red than others. The two sexes when adult are nearly of a size, and are similar in colour.

The entire length of the male figured in the Plate is forty-three inches, but a female which lived for some time in the menagerie of the Zoological Society measured forty-six inches.

	Male.	
	feet.	inches.
Length from the tip of the nose to the extremity of the tail . . . . .	3	7
„ of the tail . . . . .	1	10
„ „ tarsus and toes, including the nail . . . . .		6
„ „ arm and hand, including the nails . . . . .		5½
„ „ face from the tip of the nose to the base of the ear . . . . .		4½
„ „ face . . . . .		2

*Macropus penicillatus*, Gray in Griff. An. Kingd., vol. iii. pl. in p. 49.

*Kangurus penicillatus*, Griff. An. Kingd., vol. v. p. 204.

*Petrogale penicillatus*, Gray in Mag. Nat. Hist., vol. i. New Series, p. 583.

*Heteropus albogularis*, Jourd. Compte rendu des Séances de l'Acad. des Sci., Oct. 9, 1839, p. 522?

This species is the type of Mr. Gray's genus *Petrogale*, a well-marked group, comprising several kinds of Kangaroos, whose natural habits lead them to resort to rocky mountains, frequently those of the most steep and precipitous character; hence it is not surprising that so little has hitherto been known respecting this singular animal, since the inaccessible nature of the localities it inhabits precludes all opportunity for observation.

Two specimens, apparently young females, have for a long time formed part of the collection of the Linnean Society: they were received from New South Wales, a portion of the Australian continent where the species abounds wherever the kind of country suitable to its habits occurs. The specimens in my own collection were procured on the Liverpool range, and on the rocky sides of the mountains facing Yarrundi on the Dartbrook, a tributary of the Hunter. I also ascertained that it is very abundant on Turi, and the other mountains situated to the eastward of the Liverpool Plains, and it doubtless ranges over a much greater extent of country than we are yet acquainted with. It is considerably larger than any other species of the genus yet discovered, and like many other of the smaller Kangaroos is strictly gregarious, assembling in such numbers as to form well-beaten paths along the sides of the mountains they inhabit. Their agility in leaping from rock to rock is truly surprising, often alighting upon ledges so slight and narrow that it appears almost impossible for them to retain their footing: this power tends greatly to their protection, as neither the wily aborigine, nor their still greater enemy the Dingo, can follow them to their retreats. When closely pursued, and during the heat of the day, they seek shelter in the crevices and caverns among the rocks: to the caverns they evince a great partiality, usually, however, selecting those with more than a single outlet; a precaution rendered necessary by the frequent intrusion of the Dingo, who also resorts to similar situations.

The *Petrogale penicillata* is strictly nocturnal in its habits, and during the night frequently leaves its well-beaten tracks among the rocks for the grass beds on the crowns or base of the mountains, but never so far from its haunts as to be unable to retreat again on the slightest alarm. It also readily ascends the trunks of sloping trees, wearing a kind of track or path in the bark: while thus occupied the tail is not made use of, but hangs down unemployed.

As an article of food the flesh of this animal is most excellent.